School of Mathematical and Physical Sciences

Notes for maternity, parental and adoption leave arrangements

(referred to as "the leave period")

Please see the University's HR website on Family Leave, which includes information on Maternity Leave, Adoption Leave, Childbirth/adoption support Leave, Parental Leave and Shared Parental Leave, as well as all templates and forms needed to notify HR of this.

BEFORE YOUR MATERNITY/PARENTAL LEAVE:

For expectant mothers only: You should complete a **Risk assessment form for Expectant mothers** as soon as possible. The forms and guidelines for this can be obtained from the Health and Safety Website, or the School Manager. This form should be completed with your line manager and returned to The School Management Office as soon as possible.

For all staff intending to go on maternity / parental / adoption leave: You should **meet up with your line manager to carry out a Performance and Development Review (PDR) meeting** at least two months before the start of your leave period to discuss arrangements for the duration of you absence. The following topics may help to steer this conversation:

1. **Arranging additional support during the leave period**

For the supervision of students: you may wish to appoint a co-supervisor to take on supervision for the period of absence or completely. You can also arrange "Keeping in touch" days to supervise your student. If a senior post-doc is associated with the student project, it may be acceptable to appoint these as co-supervisor on a day-by-day basis, but an academic staff member must also be nominated as a point of first contact.

This needs to be arranged in advance so that parallel sessions can be arranged with the presence of the staff member and the co-supervisor, during the last weeks prior to the maternity leave.

For the supervision of post-docs: the supervision arrangements will depend on the seniority of the post-doc and the degree to which they are capable of looking after themselves in their PI's absence. This will need to be considered on a case-by-case basis. At the very least, a "point of contact" should be appointed, should the PI not be available for some period. In some cases, it may be necessary to arrange more regular supervision.

Note to the Line Manager/HoD: The additional workload for the staff member taking on these duties needs to be recognized and noted in the workload model, depending on which model is used. The covering staff member may feel they get sufficient reward by being involved in an additional project. In cases where post-doc supervision is taken on by a staff member, it may be appropriate to consider that they should receive some component of the overhead incentive to recognize this support.

2. **For Line Managers: management of Post-docs taking maternity / parental / adoption leave:**

If you (as a PDRA) supervise students, then someone else needs to take on this day to day supervision. You should discuss with your line manager how your leave fits in with the research contract and how it will impact on the work of the contract. Possible solutions available to NERC grant P.I.s include employing someone to provide cover for you during your leave (if the tasks are time critical), or extending the grant on a no cost extension (you will need to check to see what the restrictions are on maternity/shared parental pay), and putting the work on hold for 6 months, whilst dealing with other deliverables. Similarly, if the PDRA has other duties (e.g. teaching, seminar organization) then alternative arrangements must be arranged well in advance.

3. **Management of emails/post during the absence:**

You can set up a new email address with ITS to which only PhDs or researchers have access (for those whose work relies on regular contact). You should post an out of office response on the regular email address explaining the absence and that there will be a delay in responding. Message filters into folders are also a good way of sorting emails into topics, and certain things will need to be put on hold during your absence. You should make arrangements for someone to open your post during your absence, or for this to be forwarded to you. Similarly, your answer phone message should be modified, perhaps directing callers to the appropriate member of administrative support.

4. **Project management:**

You should discuss with your line manager what provisions are in place for signing expense claim forms, filling in NERC/EPSRC/other research council's Output and Performance Measures, annual reports, etc. Similarly, you should discuss schedules with the appropriate Finance officer, to ensure they are fully aware of your absence and to inform you of any financial issues that may arise in your absence.

5. **Keeping in touch days (KIT) or Shared Parental Leave in Touch Days (SPLIT):**

If you are going on maternity leave, you may, by agreement with your line manager, do up to ten days' work – known as "Keeping in Touch Days" (KIT Days) under your contract of employment during the leave period. KIT days allow you to go into work for up to 10 days (which may be either separate days or a single block) without losing any Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) or triggering the end of your maternity leave.

If you are going on shared parental leave, you may attend work for up to 20 days during your leave period (either separate days or a single block) without losing any Shared Parental Pay (ShPP) or triggering the end of your leave.

The type of work that you may undertake on KIT/SPLIT days is a matter for agreement between you and your manager. For this provision to work you must agree with your line manager that you will do some work and the type of work to be undertaken. Appropriate childcare arrangements should be made during any SPLIT days. The provision does not allow the University to insist that you should come into work nor does it confer a right on you to be offered work. The University will also maintain reasonable contact with you whilst you are on maternity/parental leave.

Examples of activities for KIT/SPLIT days: monitoring committees, attending workshops/training sessions, checking emails at home, seeing students who need additional support, reading reviews or draft papers, recruitment procedures for PDRAs/PhD students etc…

The School recognize this contribution to maintaining contact with the departments during your leave and top up payments for any KIT/SPLIT days carried out during the period where only SMP/ShPP is paid or during a period of no pay can be agreed with your Line Manager and Head of School. Formal arrangements to record activities and time spent during these KIT days should be made with your Line Manager before the start of your maternity leave wherever possible. This record should be sent to the School Manager once you return, so that this can be approved and sent to Payroll for processing.

6. **Buddy scheme:**

Staff returning from leave sometimes feel left behind by developments within their departments during their leave period, or feel the need for additional support on their return. The School recognizes that this return can be a difficult time and has set up a buddy scheme is available to staff going on leave, pairing them with someone who has a similar role and has had periods of maternity / parental / adoption leave. Please let your Head of Department /School Manager know if you would like to have a buddy assigned to you.

PLANNING FOR YOUR RETURN:

1. **Use of accrued holidays to extend your leave:**

Your normal holiday allocation will accrue for the period of your leave and these additional days can be used to extend your leave period, or as a regular day off per week, to reduce your working hours. If you are intending to use holidays accrued in this way, you should let your line manager know, as your actual return date (including leave) may be different to the return date given to HR (i.e. when your normal salary is paid).

2. **Sabbatical on your return (for Academic staff only):**

It is very important to protect your research career and returning from maternity/parental/adoption leave is a particularly difficult moment in this respect, and in normal circumstances it take quite some time to re-establish a research career following a break during which one's life balance is so considerably altered.

The School offers academic staff returning from leave: either one term with no teaching, or two terms with a reduced teaching load. This will allow you to take advantage of the much needed long periods of uninterrupted time to be able to get back to speed with your research.

The School suggests that your sabbatical be used to this effect. You must follow the normal procedures for requesting sabbatical, in response to the annual request for applications from the Heads of Department, and be aware that your application is likely to be in competition with other requests. You should discuss with your line manager whether you can cash in some part of your sabbatical allowance early. This could relieve you of teaching duties and the supervision of project students in order to concentrate on catching up with research and rebuilding lost momentum in terms of grant income and publications. This is excellent practice and a perfect example of making a short-term investment to achieve a long-term aim.

3. **Teaching and administrative duties on your return (for Academic staff only):**

Discuss with your Head of Department the possibility of teaching modules you have already taught, on your return to work. Make sure you are fully included in discussions about the teaching cycle, even though you are at home. Things do move on during your leave and you may need to tailor your expectations.

4. **Request for flexible working:**

Arrangements for flexible working after your leave should be discussed with your line manager before you go on maternity/parental/adoption leave, if this is possible. If not, then this request needs to be made up to 8 weeks before you return. You may request flexible working arrangements such as part time work, flexible working hours, compressed working hours, working from home. In response to part time working requests, our policy is to reduce and monitor the workload of the individual concerned, as the University contracts do not specify hours of work. This should form part of your discussions with line managers both before and after your period of leave.

These requests for flexible working should be made to the line manager and Head of School in writing using the HR forms which you can find on their website
http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/humanresources/A-Z/humres-HRatozindex.aspx?DSID=F

5. **Performance and Development Review (PDR) with your line manager on your return**

On your return to work, you should arrange another PDR with your line manager to discuss future work and developments during your absence.

On your return to work, there is a facility for nursing mothers, which you can make use of. Please contact Dawn Turner if you would like more information about this.

6. **University nursery facility**

University staff benefit from an excellent nursery facility "Little Learners Nursery" with the capacity for 106 places for full day care available to children aged from 3 months to 5 years. For more

information on this, please visit their website: http://www.rusu.co.uk/intheunion/nursery/ You are encouraged to reserve spaces at this nursery as soon as possible as spaces are very much in demand.

A child-care voucher scheme is available to university staff with children. Please visit the website for more information:

http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/humanresources/WorkingatReading/BenefitsPlus/ChildcarePlus/humres-childcareplus.aspx

7. School's Parents lunches

The School has a group of parents who get together on a monthly basis for lunch, to have the opportunity to get to know each other, share ideas and support each other. You can be added to these lists by emailing one of the coordinators, Cristina Charlton-Perez c.charlton-perez@metoffice.gov or Natalie Harvey, n.j.harvey@reading.ac.uk or the School Manager.

8. Lactation Room

The School can offer the use of a lactation room for mothers returning to work whilst they are still breastfeeding their babies, to allow them to express milk during working hours, and to return to work sooner than they might have considered otherwise. This facility includes a table, comfortable chairs, a lockable cabinet and a "do not disturb" sign. We also have a small fridge for use in your office, available to those using this facility so that they can store expressed milk in this fridge rather than use the shared fridges which staff and students use. This facility is in the Agriculture building, on the Earley Gate side of the campus. Please contact Dawn Turner if you would like to use this.

Parents wishing to use a room closer to the Maths or Polly Vacher buildings, please contact Dawn, who will identify a suitable room at the time that the request is made.

Useful websites:

University Family leave policies:

http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/humanresources/policiesandprocedures/AbsenceandLeave/humres-familyleave.aspx

University Health and Well being policy

http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/humanresources/WorkingatReading/HealthandWellbeing/humres-handwhome.aspx

Risk assessment forms for Expectant mothers:

http://www.reading.ac.uk/web/FILES/health-and-safety/NOT27_Maternity_Health_and_safety_Guidance.pdf

CHECKLIST FOR STAFF AND THEIR LINE MANAGERS

Task / Responsibility	**Staff taking leave**	**Line Manager / PI / HoD**
<u>Communicating your leave:</u>		
• Notification of HR and Line Manager	☐	
• Line Manager or HoD to announce this to others in the group / department explaining cover arrangements and email absence (discuss timing with the staff member).		☐
• Discuss with other senior members of your group arrangements for group leadership while away (staff/line manager)	☐	☐
• Make arrangements with colleagues in Reading or elsewhere for responding to proposal or paper reviews that arrive in your absence (staff)	☐	
• Completion of Expectant mothers' risk assessment form at the start and on return (for mothers only)	☐	
<u>Make arrangements for cover during absence:</u>		
• Student supervision (UG / MSc projects / PhD student)	☐	☐
• Staff supervision (post-docs, admin staff and others)	☐	☐
• Discuss with Line Manager and Finance Manager the possibility of getting an extension to the research grant funding your position	☐	☐
• Arrange cover for any teaching responsibilities during the absence		☐
<u>Email / phone Management:</u>		
• Get a new address from ITS to give to immediate colleagues	☐	
• Ask an administrator to check your emails during your absence	☐	
• Set an out of office email message for your absence	☐	
• Change your telephone answering message	☐	
• Transfer your calls to an administrator	☐	
• Arrange administrative cover for your absence	☐	☐

• Get someone to open your post during your absence, and action if necessary	☐	
<u>For those who act as signatories / authorizers:</u>		
• Make sure that these responsibilities are transferred to others:		☐
• Expense claim forms		☐
• OPMs and annual reports	☐	
• Purchase order signatories		☐
<u>KIT days:</u>		
• Agree with your line manager what you will be willing to do during your absence and that this will be dealt with as KIT/SPLIT) days	☐	☐
• Complete a KIT/SPLIT day diary during your leave and submit to the School Manager on your return	☐	
<u>Support during absence:</u>		
• Arrange for a buddy during your absence	☐	☐
• Arrange for Parents lunches emails to be sent to a personal email	☐	
<u>Making plans for your return:</u>		
• Notify the department if there are any changes to the return date (according to HR guidelines on their website)	☐	
• Discuss and agree with your line manager how you would like to return (full time or part time, using holidays / sabbaticals / flexible working)	☐	☐
• Discuss and agree on duties and responsibilities on your return	☐	☐
• Ensure that cover for absence continues on the staff member's return if necessary		☐
• Arrange a Performance and Development Review on your return to the department with your line manager.	☐	☐